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19 September 1960

OFFICE OF SECURITY DIRECTIVE NO. 60-4

FOR : All Supervisors

SUBJECT: Policy Guidance on Preparing Fitness Reports

1. The Fitness Report is one of the most important documents affecting the career of an employee. Because of its use in the competitive evaluation process it is imperative that Raters use the same standards and philosophy in arriving at numerical ratings for personnel under their supervision.
2. To begin with, it is the position of the Office of Security that a median numerical rating reflects a "competent" performance. This is on the assumption that in an organization the size of this office, the majority of personnel will equal or exceed "competent" performances; some of this majority will exceed this standard by varying degrees, a very few of whom may turn in exceptional performances. On the other hand, there will be some whose performances will fall below the standard of "competent" in varying degrees; a few of these may perform in a completely inadequate manner.
3. In assigning numerical ratings in the Fitness Report the Rater should address himself to the above enunciated philosophy and assess his employees on that basis. In order to do this the supervisor should determine in his own mind what he considers to be a "competent" performance for each grade level under his supervision. He should

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then equate that standard of performance to the appropriate median number in the Fitness Report. The median numbers are:

Section B "4"

Section C "3/4"

Section D "3"

The Rater should then rate his personnel against the standard which he has established for "competent". In other words, employees should be rated on the basis of their meeting the standard set for "competent" performance and not on the basis of their performance in relation to each other. For example, after a supervisor has determined the standard for "competent" performance in a GS grade, the person or group of persons performing in that grade should be assessed to determine whether they meet the standard, exceed it or fall below it in varying degrees; they might conceivably vary in their performances all the way from "barely adequate" to "outstanding"; on the other hand they might all be "competent", or all "outstanding", or all "barely adequate". In any case, each employee should be rated in accordance to how he measures up to the standard for "competent" performance in his grade. It would not be proper to designate one of the group as "Average", assign him the median number, and then designate the others in the group with ratings above and below the median number.

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4. For a person to be rated "7" in even one category on the Fitness Report, he must unquestionably be of exceptional caliber. It is anticipated there will not be many of these. Conversely, it is hoped very few will receive a rating of "1" in any category, but undoubtedly there occasionally should and will be such ratings. It is expected that appropriate use will be made of intermediate numerical values between the median number and the high number on one side and the median number and the low number on the other. It is in these areas that the shades of difference between employees will be revealed. Combinations such as "2/3", "5/6", etc., may be used. Ratings should be done with considered judgment in the interest of fair and accurate reports. This will greatly assist the competitive evaluation panels in making accurate evaluations.

5. Raters are cautioned that "straight line" numerical ratings usually reflect poor judgment, lack of proper application or the absence of discriminatory ability on the part of the Rater.

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6. With respect to the use of the Fitness Report in the competitive evaluation, it is essential that the Fitness Report reflect the relation of the person being rated to certain abstract elements which are considered in determining competitive evaluations. The principal abstract elements and sub-elements concerned are:

a. Performance

(1) Productivity

(2) Quality

b. Value to Agency (Potential)

(1) Supervisory or leadership qualities

(2) Flexibility or versatility

(3) Expertness

(4) Growth Potential

(5) Initiative

c. Personal Characteristics

(1) Personality

(2) Effectiveness

(3) Motivation

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7. In most instances, the numerical ratings given by the Rater in the "Specific Duty" boxes of Section B of the Fitness Report will afford definite indicies to the employee's "Productivity" and "Quality". If necessary, additional remarks on these elements should be included under "Comments". Raters are reminded that Fitness Report instructions require that "Supervision" be rated as a specific duty whenever the rated person has supervisory responsibilities; therefore this element must be rated in a "Specific Duty" box of Section B where appropriate.

8. Attached is a list of the factors which are considered in arriving at ratings for elements or sub-elements in competitive evaluations. The Fitness Report Rater should consider these factors with respect to the person being rated. Where a numerical rating does not clearly portray the relation of a sub-element to the rated person, the Rater should briefly mention in his narrative description (Section E) any strengths or weaknesses connected with the factors concerned.

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~~Sheffield~~ Edwards
Director of Security

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